

OPIOID USE DISORDER IN OHIO

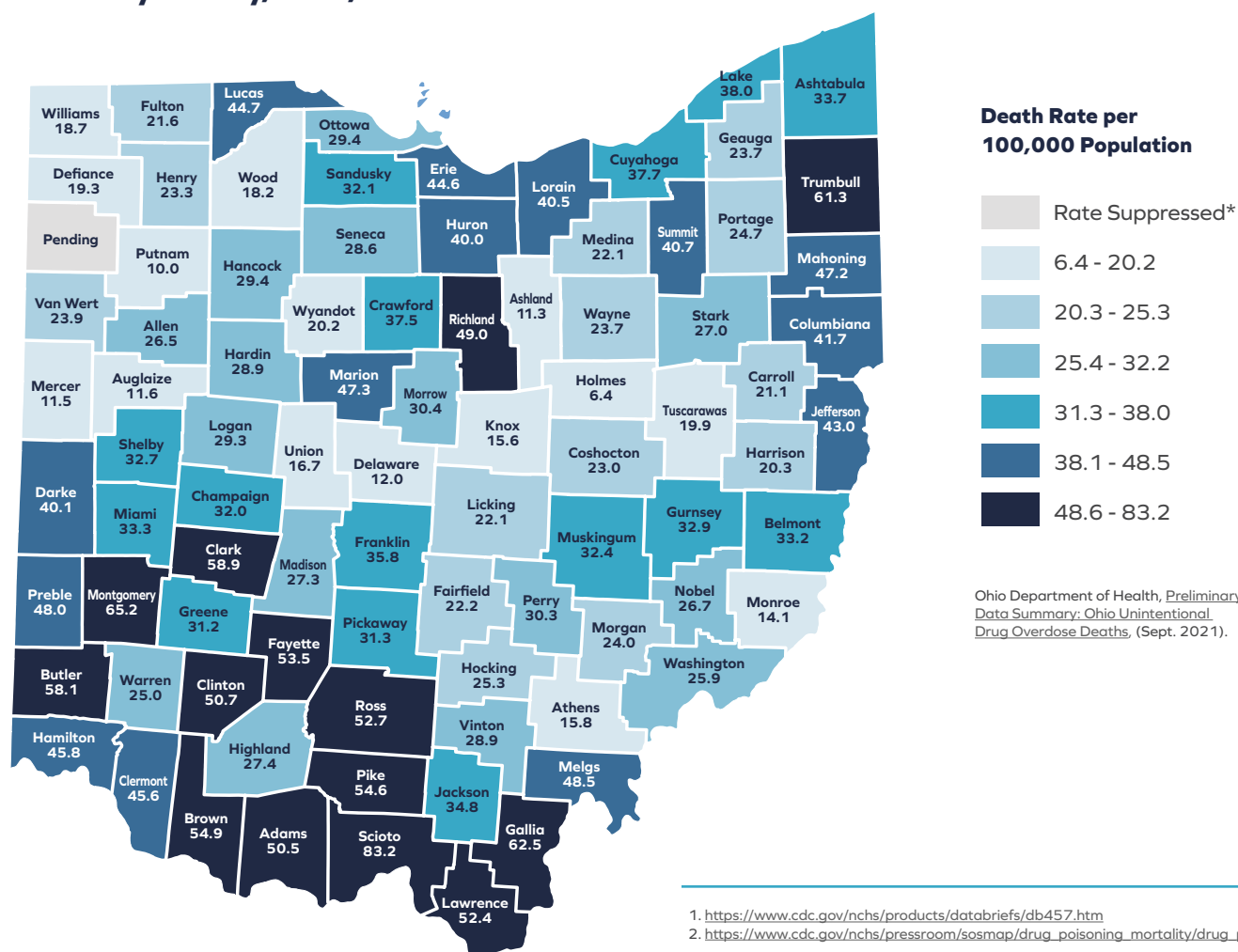
Part of the Recovery Within Reach continuing education course companion book: RecoveryWithinReach.Ohio.Gov/Training

Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., with over 100,000 lethal drug overdoses in 2021.¹ Opioid use disorder (OUD) is driving this epidemic — 75% of all overdose deaths involve opioids such as prescription pain relievers, heroin, and fentanyl. Ohio is among the states most impacted by drug overdose. Consider these statistics:

- Thirteen Ohioans die every day from unintended drug overdoses;
- Opioids account for 84% of all drug overdoses in Ohio; and
- 1 in 13 Ohioans suffer from addiction.

In 2020, Ohio was 4th in the U.S. in the number of drug overdoses, with 5,204 deaths.² This is largely due to the widespread introduction of synthetic opioids including fentanyl, which has quickly become the leading cause of overdose deaths in the United States.

Average Age-Adjusted Rate of Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths by County, Ohio, 2015-2020*



Lori's Story

Statistics do not tell the human story behind OUD. For that, it's best to talk to someone with lived experience. Lori Eisel is a financial adviser in Central Ohio whose son developed OUD as a teenager. When Lori's neighbor saw police and medics in her front yard after an incident involving her son, a neighbor was quick to promise secrecy. Lori remembers thinking: "Why would I try to hide this? I wanted other parents to know this is happening everywhere, including our suburb. We don't talk about it, but we need to."

When Lori heard about the Recovery Within Reach campaign, she volunteered to share her story in the hopes it would inspire other advisers to join her as a first line of defense for clients dealing with OUD and other substance use disorders. As Lori explains, advisers are well-positioned to spot the financial signs of substance use disorder. Through this campaign, Lori and other Ohio advisers can act on those signs and help clients access treatment resources.

How Ohio Is Dealing With the Opioid Epidemic

Ohio policymakers have worked diligently to combat the ever-changing nature of this crisis. In 2018, Governor Mike DeWine established the [RecoveryOhio initiative](#) along with the [RecoveryOhio Advisory Council](#), and has invested in the Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team to formulate strategies to try and stem opioid misuse across the state.

Governor DeWine's teams have implemented comprehensive, community-centered directives that have:

- increased law enforcement efforts to limit drug trafficking;
- implemented legislation to shut down pill mills;
- established opiate prescribing guidelines for physicians;
- expanded access to naloxone, an overdose reversal medication;
- promoted school and parent communication with youth;
- provided treatment to Ohioans involved with the criminal justice system; and
- provided treatment to low-income families across the state.

These initiatives have already decreased opioid prescriptions in the state by 3 million.

[RecoveryOhio](#) recently launched campaigns to address the problem of counterfeit pills, one of the newer threats in this epidemic. The campaign includes social media posts and downloadable fact sheets, available [here](#). The Ohio Opioid Education Alliance, meanwhile, has developed several campaigns addressing OUD in Ohio. The "[Beat the Stigma](#)" campaign is just one example, reforming negative attitudes and correcting misinformation about OUD.

Through the Recovery Within Reach campaign, the Ohio Department of Commerce joins these state partners, delivering resources as well as a message of hope and empowerment. As Governor DeWine noted in his 2023 State of the State speech:

“We must not accept that mental illness and addiction are inevitable. Or that some of these illnesses can’t be prevented. Or that we have advanced treatment as far as it will go. Or that recovery is only for the few and the lucky. None of these things are true. To make meaningful change, we must... finally get to the root causes of mental illness and addiction.”

— Governor Mike DeWine



If you feel your client or the client’s family member is in crisis, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services recommends calling 988, the national Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis, addiction crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices.

The information and data in this course are current as of April 2023. If you are taking this course after April 2023, please be aware that some information could be outdated. If you need the most up-to-date information, you may contact the Ohio Department of Commerce for assistance. The information provided in this course does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Information in this course may not constitute the most up-to-date legal or other information. Course participants should contact their attorney to obtain advice with respect to any particular legal matter. The information provided in this course is for educational and informational purposes only and does not constitute providing medical advice or professional services. The information provided should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease, and those seeking personal medical advice should consult with a licensed physician.